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## PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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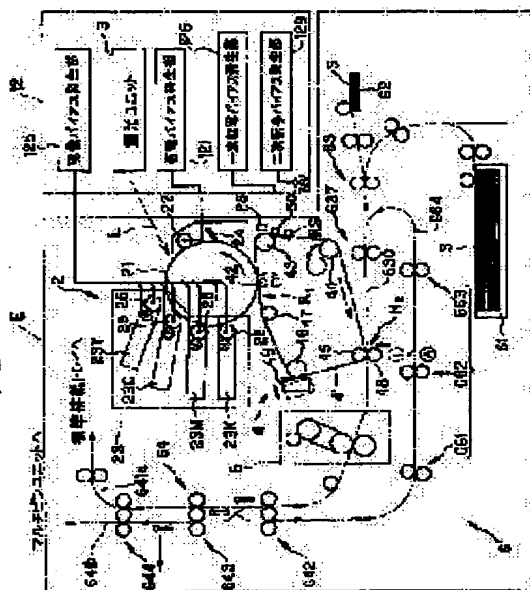
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## (54) IMAGE FORMING SYSTEM

## (57)Abstract:

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To provide an image forming system capable of stabilizing transfer efficiency by eliminating the fluctuation of the surface potential of an intermediate transfer medium in the case of using a constant-voltage power source as a primary transfer voltage power source.

**SOLUTION:** This image forming device is provided with a latent image carrier 21, plural developing devices 23Y, 23M, 23C and 23K, a primary transfer part R1 transferring a toner image successively developed with different color toner to the intermediate transfer medium 41, a primary transfer bias applying power source 126 for applying bias at the primary transfer part, and a secondary transfer part R2 transferring the full color toner image superposed and transferred on the intermediate transfer medium to recording paper. In the device, the constant-voltage power source is used as the primary transfer bias applying power source, and the electrification potential of a latent image carrier by an electrifying means 22 is fixed at least for each color toner and the gradation of the image is adjusted by adjusting the quantity of exposing light L to an image part.



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**CLAIMS**

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**[Claim(s)]**

[Claim 1] Latent-image support in which it is uniformly charged on the surface with an electrification means, rotating, it discharges alternatively with an exposure means, and an electrostatic latent image is formed Two or more development counters which give a color toner of an alternatively different color to the surface of this latent-image support, and use said latent image as a visible image The primary imprint section which imprints a toner image developed with a color toner of a different color one by one to a middle transfer medium A primary imprint bias impression power supply for impressing bias in the primary imprint section The secondary imprint section which imprints all color color toner images piled up and imprinted on a middle transfer medium on the recording paper It is the image formation method equipped with the above; and a constant voltage power supply is used as said primary imprint bias impression power supply, electrification potential of said latent-image support by said electrification means is fixed at least to a color toner of each color, and it is characterized by performing gradation adjustment of an image by adjusting light exposure to the image section.

[Claim 2] An image formation method according to claim 1 characterized by for said middle transfer medium consisting of multiple-layer structure which has a conductive layer and a resistive layer by which it is formed in one on this conductive layer, and a toner is imprinted, and impressing said primary imprint bias through said conductive layer.

[Claim 3] An image formation method according to claim 1 or 2 characterized by using a constant current power supply as a secondary imprint bias impression power supply for impressing bias in the secondary imprint section.

[Claim 4] An image formation method of three given in any 1 term from claim 1 characterized by fixing identically electrification potential of said latent-image support by said electrification means to a color toner of all colors.

[Claim 5] An image formation method of three given in any 1 term from claim 1 characterized by being set up so that electrification potential of said latent-image support according [ imprint sequence of a toner image which electrification potentials of said latent-image support by said electrification means differ for every color of a color toner, and imprint to said middle transfer medium ] to said electrification means may serve as a color toner of a high color sequentially from a color toner of a lower color.

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**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

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**[Detailed Description of the Invention]**

**[0001]**

**[The technical field to which invention belongs]** This invention relates to the image formation method of image formation equipment equipped with the middle transfer medium which the toner image especially formed on latent-image support, such as a photo conductor, is imprinted primarily, and imprints this toner image secondarily to a record medium further about the image formation method of image formation equipments, such as a printer which used the xerography, facsimile, and a copying machine.

**[0002]**

**[Description of the Prior Art]** Generally the image formation equipment using electrophotographic technology The photo conductor which has a sensitization layer in the peripheral face as latent-image support, and an electrification means to electrify the peripheral face of this photo conductor uniformly, An exposure means to expose alternatively the peripheral face uniformly electrified by this electrification means, and to form an electrostatic latent image, It has the development means which the toner as a developer is electrified in the electrostatic latent image formed by this exposure means, gives to it, and is used as a visible image (toner image), and imprint equipment which makes record media, such as a form, imprint the toner image developed by this development means.

**[0003]** And as imprint equipment which makes record media, such as a form, imprint the toner image developed on the photo conductor, the thing equipped with the middle transfer medium which the toner image formed on the photo conductor is imprinted (primary imprint), and imprints this toner image to a record medium further (secondary imprint) is known conventionally.

**[0004]** Drawing 8 is drawing showing one example of image formation equipment equipped with such a middle transfer medium, and is a b-b fragmentary sectional view [ in / (a) and / in (b) / drawing (a) ]. [ an outline perspective diagram ]

**[0005]** In drawing 8 , 201 is a photo conductor and has conductive layer 201a and sensitization layer 201b formed on this conductive layer 201a. Conductive layer 201a is grounded.

**[0006]** 202 is a middle transfer medium, for example, the volume-resistivity value consists of 107-1014ohm dielectrics it is [ dielectrics ] of abbreviation cm (inside resistive layer). Such a middle transfer medium 202 can be created by kneading conductive carbon to synthetic resin etc.

**[0007]** The middle transfer medium 202 contacts a photo conductor 201 at the time of image formation at least, and this contact section R1 forms the primary imprint section. In the primary imprint section R1, the primary imprint roller 203 is arranged among the middle transfer media 202 at the way, and primary imprint voltage is impressed to the middle transfer medium 202 by the pressure welding of this primary imprint roller 203.

**[0008]** Moreover, the pressure welding of the secondary imprint roller 204 which impresses secondary imprint voltage is carried out to the middle transfer medium 202, and this pressure-welding section forms the secondary imprint section R2. The backup roller 205 is arranged from the way among the middle transfer media 202 at the secondary imprint section R2.

**[0009]** At the time of image formation, after the rotation drive of a photo conductor 201 and the

middle transfer medium 202 is carried out and sensitization layer 201b of a photo conductor 201 is first electrified uniformly with an electrification means (not shown), it is alternatively exposed with an exposure means (not shown), and an electrostatic latent image is formed. Subsequently, the toner which is a developer is given to an electrostatic latent image by the development means (not shown), and it becomes a visible image (toner image), and this toner image is imprinted on the middle transfer medium 202 in the primary imprint section R1, and is imprinted by record media, such as a form supplied to this secondary imprint section R2, in the secondary imprint section R2 after that.

[0010] When the record medium with which the toner image was imprinted passes the fixing assembly which is not illustrated, it is fixed to a toner image.

[0011] In the image formation equipment which has the middle transfer medium 202 formed by the above uniform resistors, generally, although imprint electric field are given by the primary imprint roller 203 which contacts an imprint section rear face, when distortion etc. occurs in the middle transfer medium 202 or a contaminant adheres to the primary imprint roller 203, it becomes impossible to give electric field partially, and unevenness occurs in the image which the electric field of the imprint section became uneven and was imprinted.

[0012] Then, conductive layer 202a formed in one as a middle transfer medium 202 on insulating base 202c which consists of synthetic resin as shown in drawing 9. The thing using what consisted of resistive layer 202b by which is formed in one on it and a pressure welding is carried out to a photo conductor 201 is also known. In that case In the side edge section of that middle transfer medium 202, resistive layer 202b is removed to band-like, and conductive layer 202a is exposed to band-like, and an electrode roller contacts this outcrop and he is trying to impress primary \*\*\*\*\*. Thus, in the image formation equipment using the middle transfer medium 202 which has conductive layer 202a, since the electric field of a uniform imprint can be given throughout the imprint section also when distortion occurs in the middle transfer medium 202 or a contaminant adheres to the roller of the imprint section, it has the advantage in which the image unevenness resulting from an imprint is lost.

[0013] In the image formation equipment using the middle transfer medium 202 which has conductive layer 202a to which such primary \*\*\*\*\* is impressed, in order to have to make the timing of a primary imprint and a secondary imprint have to lap for improvement in the speed, a constant voltage power supply is used as a primary imprint voltage power supply, and the constant current power supply is used as a secondary imprint voltage power supply (JP,9-160395,A).

[0014] In addition, in U.S. Pat. No. 5,243,392, a volume-resistivity value is 1012ohms more than of abbreviation cm, and the thing to which the relaxation time makes a secondary imprint perform efficiently using middle imprint object data medium of the high resistance belt of 0.3 - 200ms is proposed.

[0015]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] In a configuration like drawing 8 and drawing 9, although the phenomenon from which a toner scatters between Rhine or it escapes makes it generating notably, and deterioration of the Rhine image will be remarkable or will be easy to generate photo conductor memory if the low middle transfer medium 202 of a volume resistivity is used, these problems are solvable by making the volume resistivity of the middle transfer medium 202 to some extent high.

[0016] However, if resistivity becomes high, the charge from a photo conductor will be charged in a middle transfer medium, it will be hard coming to escape a charge, and a problem will arise. If it specifically becomes beyond the fixed potential difference with photo conductor surface potential and the belt surface potential of a middle transfer medium, discharge will arise, and it happens that a middle transfer medium is charged by the middle transfer medium in response to the minus charge of a photo conductor (when carrying out minus electrification of the photo conductor). Photo conductor surface potential V0 It is usually the photo conductor surface potential V0 by property change change with development properties of a development counter and according to the color of a development counter, or the elapsed time from the early stages of use etc. The set points differ greatly. Therefore, the amount of negative charges which a

middle transfer medium receives from a photo conductor will also be various, and middle transfer-medium surface potential will be stabilized.

[0017] Since fixed work is done to the photo conductor image section by carrying out constant current control of the primary imprint, the problem by middle transfer-medium surface potential not being stabilized at the moment of imprinting primarily at least is not produced.

[0018] However, as described above, when a constant voltage power supply was used as a primary imprint voltage power supply, middle transfer-medium surface potential fell greatly, and since the condition that the potential difference with the photo conductor image section ran short was not canceled, it turned out that the problem that imprint effectiveness falls arises.

[0019] then, although it is possible to enlarge primary imprint voltage impressed to a middle transfer medium, if it is enlarged too much, shortly, it will obtain, if it becomes easy to generate photo conductor memory with primary imprint voltage, and a problem will arise.

[0020] It is offering [ this invention is made in view of such a trouble of the conventional technology, and ]-image formation method which the purpose loses [ method ] fluctuation of middle transfer-medium surface potential in case of using constant voltage power supply as primary imprint voltage power supply, and stabilizes imprint effectiveness \*\*\*\*.

[0021]

[Means for Solving the Problem]. An image formation method of this invention which attains the above-mentioned purpose Latent-image support in which it is uniformly charged on the surface with an electrification means, rotating, it discharges alternatively with an exposure means, and an electrostatic latent image is formed, Two or more development counters which give a color toner of an alternatively different color to the surface of this latent-image support, and use said latent image as a visible image, The primary imprint section which imprints a toner image developed with a color toner of a different color one by one to a middle transfer medium, In image formation equipment which has a primary imprint bias impression power supply for impressing bias in the primary imprint section, and the secondary imprint section which imprints all color color toner images piled up and imprinted on a middle transfer medium on the recording paper A constant voltage power supply is used as said primary imprint bias impression power supply, electrification potential of said latent-image support by said electrification means is fixed at least to a color toner of each color, and it is characterized by performing gradation adjustment of an image by adjusting light exposure to the image section.

[0022] In this case, a middle transfer medium consists of multiple-layer structure which has a conductive layer and a resistive layer by which it is formed in one on this conductive layer, and a toner is imprinted, and it is desirable that it is that to which primary imprint bias is impressed through a conductive layer.

[0023] Moreover, it is desirable to use a constant current power supply as a secondary imprint bias impression power supply for impressing bias in the secondary imprint section.

[0024] Moreover, electrification potential of latent-image support by electrification means may be identically fixed to a color toner of all colors.

[0025] Moreover, electrification potentials of latent-image support by electrification means differ for every color of a color toner, and it may be set up so that electrification potential of latent-image support according [ imprint sequence of a toner image imprinted to a middle transfer medium ] to an electrification means may serve as a color toner of a high color sequentially from a color toner of a lower color.

[0026] In this invention, a constant voltage power supply is used as a primary imprint bias impression power supply, and electrification potential of latent-image support by electrification means Since it is fixed at least to a color toner of each color and gradation adjustment of an image is performed by adjusting light exposure to the image section Fluctuation of surface potential on a middle transfer medium while imprinting a toner image of a different color to a middle transfer medium in order can be sharply made small, imprint effectiveness to a middle transfer medium of a toner image can be stabilized, and image formation equipment which is reliable, without also producing a cost rise of equipment can be realized.

[0027]

[Embodiment of the Invention] Hereafter, the configuration of the whole of one example of the

printer of the image formation equipment using the xerography which applies the image formation method of this invention is explained.

[0028] Drawing 1 is drawing showing one operation gestalt of the image formation equipment which applies the image formation method of this invention. Moreover, drawing 2 is the block diagram showing the electric configuration of the image formation equipment of drawing 1. This image formation equipment is yellow (Y), cyanogen (C), a Magenta (M), and equipment that piles up the toner of four colors of black (K) and forms a monochrome image, using only the toner of black (K) in forming a full color image \*\*\*\*, if a picture signal is given to the Maine controller 11 of a control unit 1 from external devices, such as a host computer, with this image formation equipment — the command from this Maine controller 11 — responding — en zincon — each part of the engine section E on which truck 12 fatty tuna functions as an image formation means is controlled, and the image corresponding to a picture signal is formed in Sheet S.

[0029] A toner image can be formed in the photo conductor 21 of the image support unit 2 in this engine section E. That is, the \*\*\*\*\* unit 2 is equipped with the pivotable photo conductor 21 in the direction of an arrow head of drawing 1, and the electrification roller 22 as an electrification means, the development counters 23Y, 23C, 23M, and 23K as a development means, and the cleaning section 24 are further arranged along the hand of cut, respectively around the photo conductor 21. The high voltage is impressed from the electrification bias generating section 121, and the electrification roller 22 electrifies a peripheral face in homogeneity in contact with the peripheral face of a photo conductor 21. The photo conductor 21 has conductive layer 21a and sensitization layer 21b formed on this conductive layer 21a, as shown in drawing 3.

[0030] And laser beam L is irradiated from the exposure unit 3 towards the peripheral face of the photo conductor 21 charged with this electrification roller 22. As shown in drawing 2, it connects with the picture signal change over section 122 electrically, and this exposure unit 3 carries out scan exposure of the laser beam L on a photo conductor 21 according to the picture signal given through this picture signal change over section 122, and forms the electrostatic latent image corresponding to a picture signal on a photo conductor 21. For example, when the picture signal change over section 122 has flowed with the patch creation module 124 based on the command from CPU123 of the engine controller 12, the patch picture signal outputted from the patch creation module 124 is given to the exposure unit 3, and a patch latent image is formed. On the other hand, when the picture signal change over section 122 has flowed with CPU111 of the Maine controller 11, according to the picture signal given through the interface 112 from external devices, such as a host computer, scan exposure of the laser beam L is carried out on a photo conductor 21, and the electrostatic latent image corresponding to a picture signal is formed on a photo conductor 21.

[0031] In this way, toner development of the formed electrostatic latent image is carried out by the development section 23. That is, in this operation gestalt, development counter 23K for development counter 23M and blacks development counter 23Y for yellow, development counter 23C for cyanogen, and for Magentas are arranged along with the photo conductor 21 as the development section 23 in this sequence. These development counters 23Y, 23C, 23M, and 23K While it is constituted free [ attachment and detachment ] to the photo conductor 21, respectively and one development counter in the four above-mentioned development counters 23Y, 23M, 23C, and 23K contacts a photo conductor 21 alternatively according to the command from the engine controller 12 By the development bias generating section 125, the high voltage gives the toner of the color impressed and chosen as the developing roller 25 of a development counter to the surface of a photo conductor 21, and actualizes the electrostatic latent image on a photo conductor 21.

[0032] the toner image developed in the development section 23 — the object for blacks — it imprints primarily on the middle imprint belt 41 of the imprint unit 4 in the primary imprint field R1 located between development counter 23K and the cleaning section 24. In addition, the structure of this imprint unit 4 is explained in full detail later.

[0033] Moreover, it is failed after a primary imprint for the cleaning section 24 to be arranged from the primary imprint field R1 in the location which went to the hoop direction (the direction



of an arrow head of drawing 1 ), and to scratch the toner which is carrying out residual adhesion to the peripheral face of a photo conductor 21.

[0034] Next, the configuration of the imprint unit 4 is explained. The imprint unit 4 is equipped with rollers 42-47, the middle imprint belt 41 over which each [ these ] rollers 42-47 were built, and the secondary imprint roller 48 which imprints secondarily the middle toner image imprinted by this middle imprint belt 41 on Sheet S with this operation gestalt.

[0035] Like the conventional example explained by drawing 9 , as a cross section is shown in drawing 3 , this middle imprint belt 41 Conductive layer 41a formed in one on insulating base 41c which consists of synthetic resin, What consisted of resistive layer 41b by which is formed in one on it and a pressure welding is carried out to a photo conductor 21 is used. In the side edge section of that middle imprint belt 41, resistive layer 41b is removed to band-like, conductive layer 41a is exposed to band-like, and when the electrode roller 50 contacts this outcrop, primary imprint voltage is impressed from the primary imprint bias generating section 126. and in imprinting a color picture on Sheet S Make the primary imprint backup roller 42 \*\*\*\* to a continuous line location, and the pressure welding of the middle imprint belt 41 is carried out to a photo conductor 21. It is made to imprint on the middle imprint belt 41 with the primary imprint voltage to which the toner image of each color formed on a photo conductor 21 was impressed by conductive layer 41a of the middle imprint belt 41. While carrying out the circulation drive of a photo conductor 21 and the middle imprint belt 41, piling up and imprinting the toner image of each color on the middle imprint belt 41 and forming a color image By the feed section 63 of the feeding-and-discarding paper unit 6, Sheet S is picked out from a cassette 61, a detachable tray 62, or an extension cassette (illustration abbreviation), and it conveys to secondary imprint \*\*\*\* R2. And to the secondary imprint backup roller 45, the secondary imprint roller 48 is made to \*\*\*\* to a continuous line location, a pressure welding is carried out from the rear-face side of Sheet S, secondary imprint voltage is impressed from the secondary imprint bias generating section 129, a color image is secondarily imprinted on this sheet S, and a full color image is obtained. Moreover, in imprinting a monochrome image on Sheet S, only a black toner image is formed on a photo conductor 21, and it imprints on the middle imprint belt 41, it imprints on the sheet S conveyed to the secondary imprint field R2 like the case of a color picture, and obtains a monochrome image.

[0036] In addition, about the toner which is carrying out residual adhesion, it is removed by the peripheral face of the middle imprint belt 41 with a belt cleaner 49 after a secondary imprint. On both sides of the middle imprint belt 41, this belt cleaner 49 counters with a roller 46, is arranged, and a cleaner blade contacts to the middle imprint belt 41 to suitable timing, and it fails to scratch the toner which is carrying out residual adhesion to that peripheral face.

[0037] Moreover, while the patch sensor PS for detecting the concentration of the patch image formed in the peripheral face of the middle imprint belt 41 near the roller 43 is arranged, the reading sensor RS for a synchronization for detecting the criteria location of the middle imprint belt 41 is arranged.

[0038] It returns to drawing 1 and configuration explanation of the engine section E is continued. The sheet S with which the toner image was imprinted by the imprint unit 4 is conveyed by the fixing unit 5 arranged in the downstream of \*\*\*\*\* secondary imprint \*\*\*\* R2 by the predetermined feed path (two-dot chain line) by the feed section 63 of the feeding-and-discarding paper unit 6, and is fixed to Sheet S in the toner image on the sheet S conveyed. And the sheet S concerned meets the feed path 630 further, and is conveyed by the delivery unit 64.

[0039] While this delivery unit 64 has two delivery paths 641a and 641b and one delivery path 641a is prolonged in a standard paper output tray from the fixing unit 5, delivery path 641b of another side is prolonged between the re-feeding section 66 and a multi-bottle unit in delivery path 641a and abbreviation parallel. In accordance with these delivery paths 641a and 641b, 3 sets of roller pair 642-644 are prepared, turn the sheet [ finishing / fixing ] S to a standard paper output tray and multi-bottle unit side, and it discharges, or in order to form an image also in the another side side side, it conveys to the re-feeding section 66 side.

[0040] the sheet S by which reversal conveyance has been carried out as mentioned above from

the delivery unit 64 as this re-feeding section 66 is shown in drawing 1 — the re-feeding path 664 (two-point \*\*\*\*) — meeting — the gate roller pair of the feed section 63 — three which conveys to 637 and were arranged in accordance with the re-feeding path 664 — re — it consists of feed roller pair 661–663. thus, the sheet S conveyed from the delivery unit 64 — the re-feeding path 664 — meeting — a gate roller pair — by returning to 637, in the feed section 63, the non-image formation side of Sheet S turns to the middle imprint belt 41, and the secondary imprint of an image of it is attained in the field concerned.

[0041] In addition, in order to memorize the image with which the sign 113 was given through the ITA face 112 in drawing 2 from external devices, such as a host computer, it is the image memory established in the Main controller 11, and a sign 127 is RAM for memorizing temporarily the result of an operation in control data and CPU123 for controlling the engine section E etc., and a sign 128 is ROM which memorizes the operation program performed by CPU123 further.

[0042] Here, in above image formation equipment, the primary imprint bias generating section 126 which impresses primary imprint voltage to the middle imprint belt 41 in the primary imprint section R1 consists of constant voltage power supplies, and the secondary imprint bias generating section 129 which impresses secondary imprint voltage to the secondary imprint roller 48 in the secondary imprint field R2 consists of constant current power supplies.

[0043] Moreover, it is the volume resistivity of resistive layer 41b of the middle imprint belt 41 at the primary imprint voltage 250V impression time, and it is  $1.5 \times 10^{12}$ -ohmcm (23 degrees C, 65% RH).

[0044] The case where carry out minus electrification at a photo conductor 21, and reversal development is carried out with a minus electrification 1 component nonmagnetic toner using such equipment with development counters 23Y, 23C, 23M, and 23K is examined.

[0045] First, change of the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41 of whenever it piles up the count of a primary imprint at the time of changing the electrification bias impressed to the electrification roller 22 from the electrification bias generating section 121 (count of a periphery) was investigated. This surface potential is the potential of the non-image section. Under the present circumstances, the voltage impressed to conductive layer 41a of the middle imprint belt 41 is fixed to +300V from the primary imprint bias generating section 126, and temperature and humidity are 23 degrees C and 65%RH. The result is shown in drawing 4 (a) and (b). Among drawing, the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41 is "entomophily surface potential", and has expressed the count of an accumulation primary imprint as "the count of an entomophily periphery."

[0046] Drawing 4 (a) is the photo conductor surface potential V0 by the case where electrification bias is impressed -1200V. It is set to -600V. Before performing a primary imprint, it was entomophily surface potential 300V, but if a primary imprint is performed once, it will carry out to 260V twice, it will carry out to 245V 3 times and it will carry out to 240V 4 times, entomophily surface potential will fall and go to 238V. This is to discharge and accumulate the minus electrification charge of the photo conductor 21 surface in the surface of the middle imprint belt 41, and to go according to the potential difference of the surface potential of a photo conductor 21, and the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41.

[0047] Drawing 4 (b) is the same drawing at the time of impressing -1400V with -1000V about electrification bias, and is the photo conductor surface potential V0. Although it was entomophily surface potential 300V before being set to -400V and -800V, respectively and performing a primary imprint If a primary imprint is performed once, it will carry out to 287V and 233V twice, respectively, it will carry out to 282V and 209V 3 times, respectively and it will carry out to 280V and 200V 4 times, respectively, it will fall to 280V and 196V, respectively, and will go.

[0048] According to the electrification bias from the above result to a photo conductor 21, the change width of face according to the count of a primary imprint of the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41 will differ. If the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41 is changed sharply, primary imprint effectiveness will become unstable. Therefore, as for electrification bias, in the above image formation equipments, it is desirable not to make it change as much as possible.

[0049] In addition, it is the photo conductor surface potential V0 to drawing 5 . Although it is

drawing showing the result of having investigated the amount of negative charges charged on the middle imprint belt 41 at the time of the imprint of the 1st round and shifts from this result a little after the 2nd round when the potential difference with entomophily surface potential changes. When the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41 is changed and the potential difference between the surface potentials  $V_0$  of a photo conductor 21 is changed from this drawing 5, it turns out that the amount of negative charges on the middle imprint belt 41 changes by proportionality according to it. Fluctuation of the amount of negative charges on this middle imprint belt 41 will also fluctuate the imprint effectiveness of the toner image imprinted by the primary imprint voltage of a constant voltage from a photo conductor 21 to the middle imprint belt 41.

[0050] By the way, in the above image formation equipments, in order to adjust the gradation of the image to form conventionally, as a mimetic diagram is shown in drawing 6 (a), the amount of toners which electrification bias is changed, and photo conductor electrification potential is changed, and adheres to the image section is adjusted. In drawing 6 (a), if electrification bias is raised and photo conductor electrification potential is raised from  $-500V$  to  $-800V$ , since the area which potential distribution of the image section and a non-image changes from a continuous line like a dashed line, and is surrounded with the dashed line not more than

development bias  $-300V$  of drawing will become small, from development bias  $-300V$ , the amount of toners adhering to a low potential portion decreases in an absolute value, and it becomes thinner. On the contrary, if photo conductor electrification potential is lowered to  $-500V$  from  $-800V$ , the amount of toners adhering to the image section will increase, and will become deeper.

[0051] However, it is more desirable not to perform gradation adjustment of the image by adjustment of such electrification bias, since the change width of face of the surface potential of the middle imprint belt 41 will become large and primary imprint effectiveness will become unstable, if electrification bias is changed and adjustment of such gradation is performed as mentioned above.

[0052] Then, in this invention, as shown in drawing 6 (b), without changing electrification bias and changing photo conductor electrification potential, the light exposure of the image section is adjusted and the gradation of an image is adjusted. In drawing 6 (b), if the light exposure of the image section is lowered and the exposure section potential of a photo conductor is raised from  $-50V$  to  $-200V$ , since the area which potential distribution of the image section and a non-image changes from a continuous line like a dashed line, and is surrounded with the dashed line not more than development bias  $-300V$  of drawing will become small, from development bias  $-300V$ , the amount of toners adhering to a low potential portion decreases in an absolute value, and it becomes thinner. On the contrary, if light exposure is raised and the exposure section potential of a photo conductor is lowered to  $-50V$  from  $-200V$ , the amount of toners adhering to the image section will increase, and will become deeper.

[0053] By the way, from the properties of a toner differing for every color in the image formation equipment equipped with the development counters 23Y, 23C, 23M, and 23K of four colors in order to pile up the toner of four colors and to form a full color image, as shown in drawing 1, in practice, it responds to the color of a toner and is the photo conductor surface potential  $V_0$ . It must be made to differ. In the above-mentioned example, in order to form the optimal toner image on a photo conductor 21. When forming a yellow toner image by development counter 23Y. By setting electrification bias to  $-1400V$ , when forming a Magenta toner image in  $-800V$  by development counter 23M, the photo conductor surface potential  $V_0$ . Electrification bias is set to  $-1300V$  and it is the photo conductor surface potential  $V_0$ . When forming a cyanogen toner image in  $-700V$  by development counter 23C. Electrification bias is set to  $-1200V$  and it is the photo conductor surface potential  $V_0$ . It is desirable to set electrification bias to  $-1100V$  and to make photo conductor surface potential  $V_0$  them  $-500V$ , when forming a black toner image in  $-600V$  by development counter 23K.

[0054] Drawing 7 is drawing showing the result of having investigated the different formation sequence of the toner image of a color and the relation of change of entomophily surface potential, when electrification bias must be changed by the color of the toner developed in this way. Temperature and humidity were set to 23 degrees C and 65%RH.

[0055] this drawing 7 — setting — descending — electrification bias — descending — that is The yellow toner image of -1400V and the 2nd round 1st round The Magenta toner image of -1300V, It is the case where formed the cyanogen toner image of -1200V 3rd round, and the black toner image of -1100V is formed 4th round. With small order The order with electrification bias small on the contrary, i.e., the 1st round, is the case where formed the Magenta toner image of -1300V the cyanogen toner image of -1200V, and 3rd round, and the black toner image of -1100V and the 2nd round form the yellow toner image of -1400V 4th round.

[0056] Although it will fall to 170V and will go if entomophily surface potential performs a primary imprint once when electrification bias performs a primary imprint to descending so that clearly from this drawing 7, it will carry out to 300V twice, it will carry out to 235V 3 times and it will carry out to 194V 4 times When electrification bias performs a primary imprint in small order, and a primary imprint is performed once, to 300V It is [ the fall width of face of entomophily surface potential ] smaller to fall to 214V, to go, if it carries out twice, it will carry out to 274V 3 times and it will carry out to 245V 4 times, and to perform a primary imprint in order with clearly small electrification bias, it is stabilized more, and a primary imprint can be ensured.

[0057] The image formation method of this invention impresses the primary imprint voltage of fixed voltage from the constant voltage power supply of the primary imprint bias generating section 126, and as mentioned above, the electrification potential of the photo conductor 21 with the electrification roller 22 Although it is fixed at least to the color toner image of each color and gradation adjustment of a toner image is performed by adjusting the light exposure to the image section For that purpose, the electrification bias from the electrification bias generating section 121 It enables it to adjust for gradation adjustment of the reinforcement of laser beam L from the exposure unit 3 by which intensity modulation is carried out according to the picture signal which did not drive possible [ adjustment ] for gradation adjustment of the toner image to develop, instead was given through the interface 112.

[0058] Moreover, although the set-up electrification bias makes development counters 23Y, 23C, 23M, and 23K choose and contact small order and makes development actuation perform, the engine controller 12 chooses the four above-mentioned development counters 23Y, 23M, 23C, and 23K as order with electrification bias small as mentioned above, and it is made to make the image formation method of this invention contact a photo conductor 21 for that purpose.

[0059] As mentioned above, although the image formation method of this invention has been explained based on an example, this invention is not limited to these examples, but various deformation is possible for it.

[0060]

[Effect of the Invention] According to the image formation method of this invention, a constant voltage power supply is used as a primary imprint bias impression power supply, and the electrification potential of the latent-image support by the electrification means so that clearly from the above explanation Since it is fixed at least to the color toner of each color and gradation adjustment of an image is performed by adjusting the light exposure to the image section Fluctuation of the surface potential on a middle transfer medium while imprinting the toner image of a different color to a middle transfer medium in order can be sharply made small, the imprint effectiveness to the middle transfer medium of a toner image can be stabilized, and the image formation equipment which is reliable, without also producing the cost rise of equipment can be realized.

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[Translation done.]

**\* NOTICES \***

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**DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS**

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**[Brief Description of the Drawings]**

**[Drawing 1]** It is drawing showing one operation gestalt of the image formation equipment which applies the image formation method of this invention.

**[Drawing 2]** It is the block diagram showing the electric configuration of the image formation equipment of drawing 1 .

**[Drawing 3]** It is the lamination \*\*\*\* cross section of a middle imprint belt and a photo conductor.

**[Drawing 4]** It is drawing showing the result of having investigated change of the middle imprint hair side of belt side potential of \*\* which piles up the count of a primary imprint at the time of changing electrification bias.

**[Drawing 5]** When the potential difference of photo conductor surface potential and a middle imprint belt changes, it is drawing showing the result of having investigated the amount of negative charges charged on a middle imprint belt.

**[Drawing 6]** It is drawing for explaining gradation adjustment of the conventional image and gradation adjustment of the image of this invention.

**[Drawing 7]** It is drawing showing the result of having investigated the formation sequence of the toner image when having to change electrification bias by the color of the toner to develop, and the relation of change of entomophily surface potential.

**[Drawing 8]** It is drawing showing one example of image formation equipment equipped with the middle transfer medium.

**[Drawing 9]** It is the lamination \*\*\*\* cross section of a middle transfer medium and a photo conductor in the modification of drawing 8 .

**[Description of Notations]**

E — Engine section

S — Sheet

L — Laser beam

R1 — Primary imprint field

R2 — Secondary imprint \*\*\*\*

PS — Patch sensor

RS — Reading sensor for a synchronization

1 — Control unit

2 — Image support unit

3 — Exposure unit

4 — Imprint unit

5 — Fixing unit

6 — Feeding and discarding paper unit

11 — Main controller

12 — en zincon — truck fatty tuna

21 — Photo conductor

21a — Conductive layer

21b — Sensitization layer

22 — Electrification roller  
23 — Development section  
23Y — Development counter for yellow  
23C — Development counter for cyanogen  
23M — Development counter for Magentas  
23K — Development counter for blacks  
24 — Cleaning section  
25 — Developing roller  
41 — Middle imprint belt  
41a — Conductive layer  
41b — Resistive layer  
41c — Insulating base  
42 — Primary imprint backup roller  
43 44 — Roller  
45 — Secondary imprint backup roller  
46 47 — Roller  
48 — Secondary imprint roller  
49 — Belt cleaner  
50 — Electrode roller  
61 — KASETSU  
62 — Detachable tray  
63 — Feed section  
64 — Delivery unit  
66 — Re-feeding section  
111 — CPU  
112 — Interface  
113 — Image memory  
121 — Electrification bias generating section  
122 — Picture signal change over section  
123 — CPU  
124 — Patch creation module  
125 — Development bias generating section  
126 — Primary imprint bias generating section  
127 — RAM  
128 — ROM  
129 — Secondary imprint bias generating section  
630 — Feed path  
637 — Gate roller pair  
641a, 641b — Delivery path  
642-644 — Roller pair  
661-663 — Re-feeding roller pair  
664 — Re-feeding path

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[Translation done.]

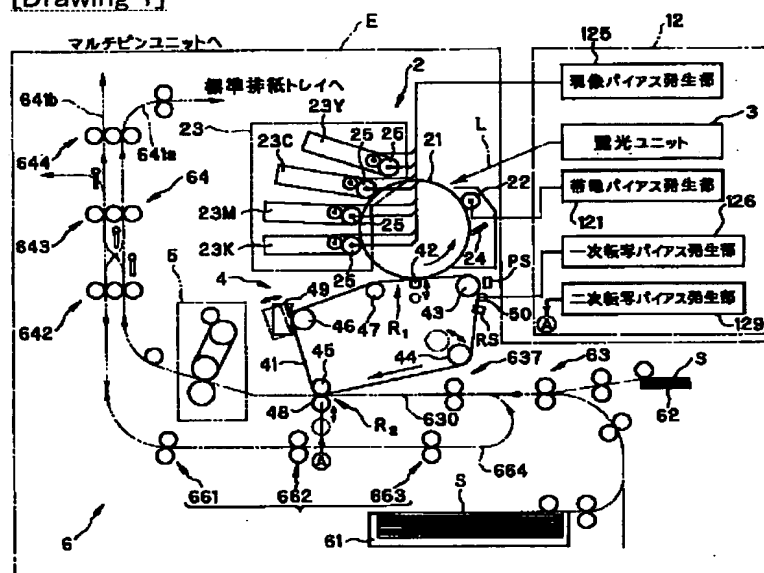
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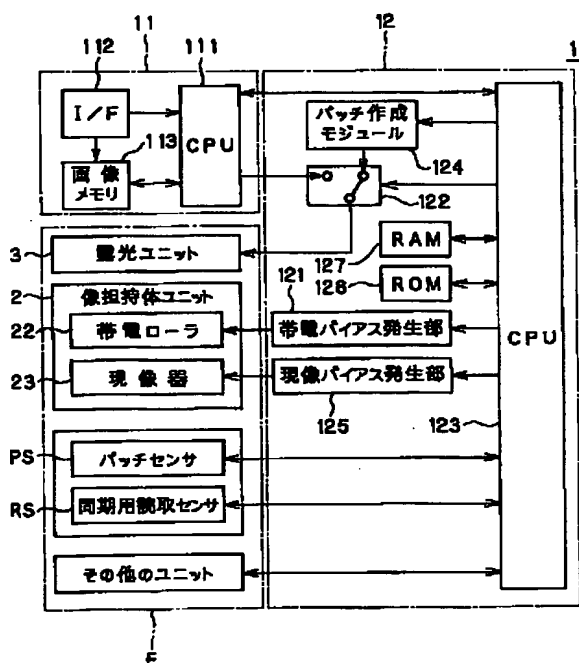
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## DRAWINGS

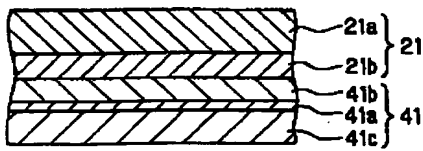
[Drawing 1]



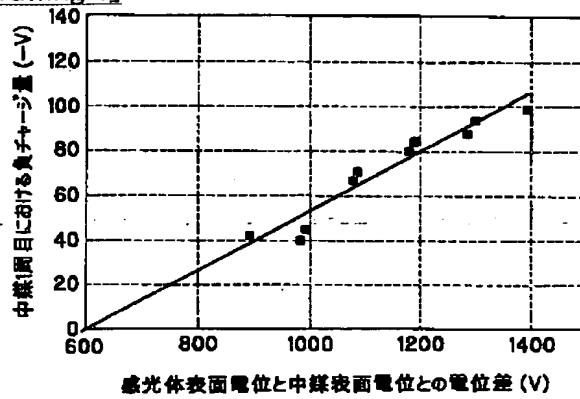
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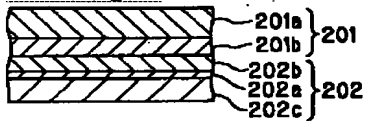
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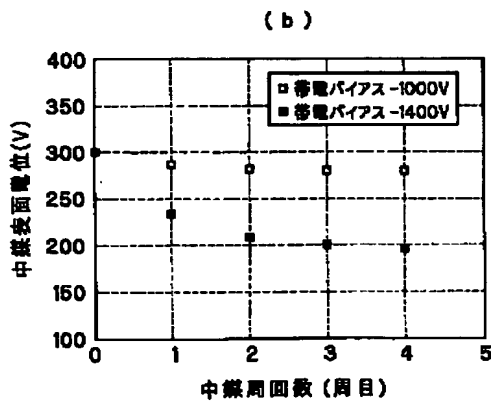
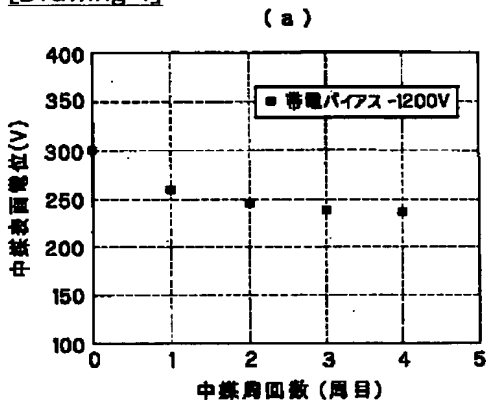
[Drawing 5]



[Drawing 9]

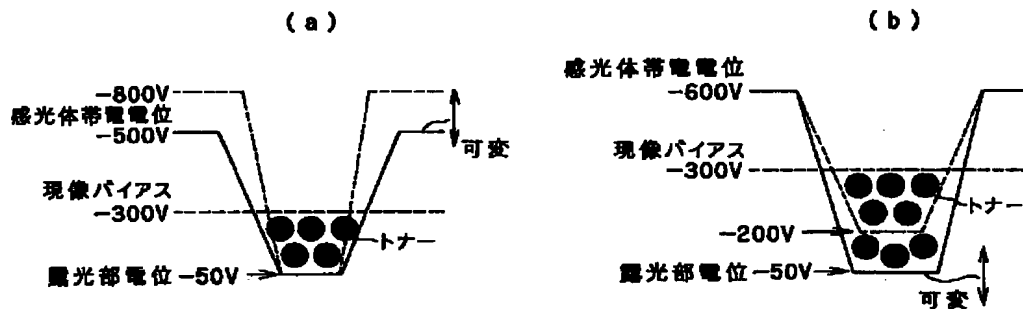


[Drawing 4]

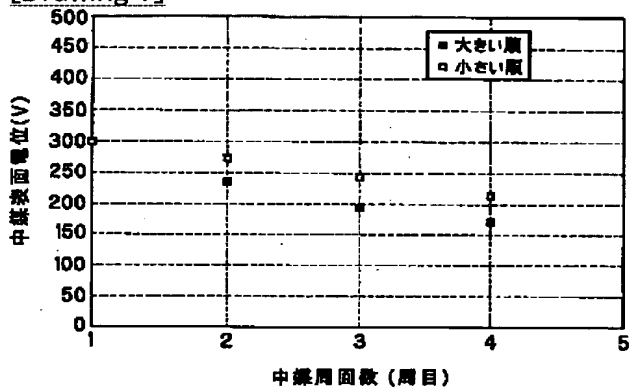




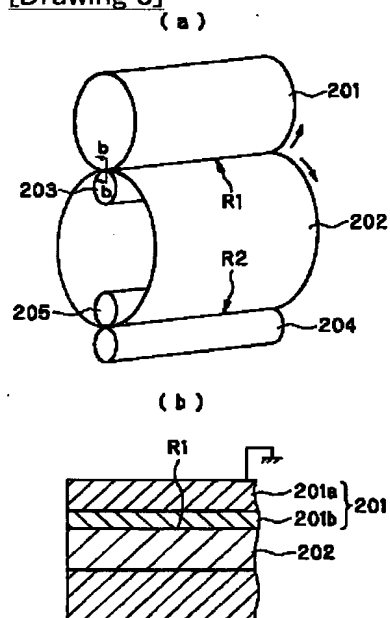
[Drawing 6]



[Drawing 7]



[Drawing 8]



[Translation done.]

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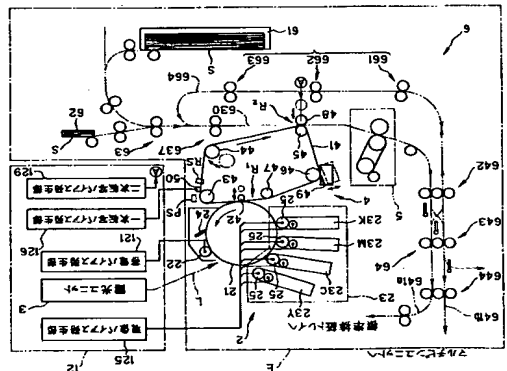
(51) IntCl. <sup>7</sup>	識別記号	PI	チーフ・ド(参考)
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15/043		15/16	1 14 Z 2 H 0 3 2
15/04		15/04	1 03 2 H 0 7 6
			120

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(54) 発明の名称 画像形成方式

(57) [要約]  
【課題】 一次転写電圧として定電圧電源を用いる場合の中間転写媒体表面電位の変動をなくして転写効率を安定化させる画像形成方式。  
【解決手段】 潜像担持体21と、複数の現像器23 Y、M、C、Kと、順次異なる色のカラートナーにより現像されたトナー像を中間転写媒体41に転写する一次転写部R1と、一次転写部においてバイアスを印加するための一次転写バイアス印加電源126と、中間転写媒体上に重ね合わされて転写された全色カラートナー像を記録媒体に転写する二次転写部R2とを有する画像形成装置において、一次転写バイアス印加電源として定電圧電源を用いられ、帯電手段22による潜像担持体の帯電電位は、少なくとも各色のカラートナーに対しては固定され、画像の階調調整は画像部への露光量の量を整えることによって行う。



【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 回転しつつ帯電手段により表面に一樣に帯電され、露光手段により選択的に放電されて静電潜像が形成される潜像担持体と、この潜像担持体の表面に選択的に異なる色のカラートナーを付与して前記潜像を可視像とする複数の現像器と、順次異なる色のカラートナーにより現像されたトナー像を中間転写媒体に転写する一次転写部と、一次転写部においてバイアスを印加するための一次転写バイアス印加電源と、中間転写媒体上に重ね合わされて転写された全色カラートナー像を記録媒体に転写する二次転写部とを有する画像形成装置において、前記一次転写バイアス印加電源として定電圧電源を用いられ、前記帯電手段による前記潜像担持体の帯電電位は、少なくとも各色のカラートナーに対しては固定され、画像の階調調整は画像部への露光量を調整することによって行うことを特徴とする画像形成方式。

【請求項2】 前記中間転写媒体が、導電層と、この導電層の上に一体的に形成されトナーが転写される抵抗層とを有する複層体で構成されており、前記一次転写バイアスが前記導電層を介して印加されることを特徴とする請求項1記載の画像形成方式。

【請求項3】 二次転写部においてバイアスを印加するための二次転写バイアス印加電源として定電圧電源が用いられることを特徴とする請求項1又は2記載の画像形成方式。

【請求項4】 前記帯電手段による前記潜像担持体の帯電電位が全ての色のカラートナーに対して同一に固定されていることを特徴とする請求項1から3の何れか1項記載の画像形成方式。

【請求項5】 前記帯電手段による前記潜像担持体の帯電電位がカラートナーの色毎に異なり、前記中間転写媒体に転写するトナー像の転写順序が、前記帯電手段による前記潜像担持体の帯電電位により低い色のカラートナーから順に高い色のカラートナーとなるように設定されていることを特徴とする請求項1から3の何れか1項記載の画像形成方式。

【発明の詳細な説明】

【0001】  
【発明の属する技術分野】 本発明は、電子写真法を用いたプリンタ、ファクシミリ、複写機等の画像形成装置の画像形成方式に関し、特に、感光体等の潜像担持体上に形成されたトナー像が一次転写され、このトナー像をさらに記録媒体に二次転写する中間転写媒体を備えた画像形成装置の画像形成方式に関するものである。

【0002】  
【従来の技術】 一般に、電子写真技術を用いた画像形成装置は、潜像担持体としての外周面に感光層を有する感光体と、この感光体の外周面を一樣に帯電させる帯電手段と、この帯電手段により一様に帯電せられた外周面

を選択的に露光して静電潜像を形成する露光手段と、この露光手段により形成された静電潜像に現像剤としてのトナーを帯電させて付与し可視像(トナー像)とする現像手段と、この現像手段により現像されたトナー像を用紙等の記録媒体に転写させる転写装置とを有している。  
【0003】そして、感光体上に現像されたトナー像を、用紙等の記録媒体に転写させさせる転写装置としては、従来、感光体上に形成されたトナー像が転写(一次転写)され、このトナー像をさらに記録媒体に転写(二次転写)する中間転写媒体を備えたものが知られている。  
【0004】図8は、このような中間転写媒体を備えた画像形成装置の一例を示す図で、(a)は露光斜視図、(b)は図(a)におけるb-b部分断面図である。

【0005】図8において、201は感光体であり、導電層201aと、この導電層201a上に形成された感光層201bとを有している。導電層201aは接地されている。

【0006】202は中間転写媒体であり、例えば体積抵抗値が $10^7 \sim 10^{14} \Omega \cdot \text{cm}$ の誘電体(中抵抗層)で構成されている。このような中間転写媒体202は、合成樹脂等に導電性カーボンを混練することによって作成することができる。

【0007】中間転写媒体202は、少なくとも画像形成時には感光体201と接触し、この接触部R1が一次転写部を形成する。一次転写部R1には、中間転写媒体202の内方に一次転写ローラ203が配置されており、この一次転写ローラ203の圧接によって中間転写媒体202に一次転写電圧が印加される。

【0008】また、中間転写媒体202には、二次転写電圧を印加する二次転写ローラ204が圧接され、この圧接部が二次転写部R2を形成する。二次転写部R2には、中間転写媒体202の内方からバックアップローラ205が配置されている。

【0009】画像形成時には、まず、感光体201および中間転写媒体202が回転駆動され、感光体201の一次転写部R1と二次転写部R2が圧接され、この圧接部R1で一次転写(図示せず)で一様に帯電せられた後に露光手段(図示せず)で選択的に露光され、静電潜像が形成される。次いで、静電潜像に現像手段(図示せず)で現像剤であるトナーが付与されて可視像(トナー像)となり、このトナー像が、一次転写部R1において中間転写媒体202上に転写され、その後、二次転写部R2において、この二次転写部R2に供給される用紙等の記録媒体に転写される。

【0010】トナー像が転写された記録媒体は、図示しない定着器を通過することによってトナー像が定着される。

【0011】上記のような均一な抵抗体で形成される中間転写媒体202を有する画像形成装置においては、一般的に転写部は転写部表面に当接する一次転写ローラ203により付与されるが、中間転写媒体202に組み



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接させて、感光体21上に形成される各色のトナー像を中間転写ベルト41の導電層41aに印加された一次転写電圧によって中間転写ベルト41上に転写させ、感光体21と中間転写ベルト41を循環駆動させて各色のトナー像を中間転写ベルト41上に重ね合わせて転写してカラー像を形成すると共に、給排紙ユニット6の給紙部63によってカセット61、手差しトレイ62あるいは63からシートSの非画像形成面6を取出して二次増設カセット(図示省略)からシートSを取出して二次転写領域R2に搬送する。そして、二次転写バックアップローラ45に対してシートSの裏面側から二次転写ローラ48を駆動位置へ変換させて圧接し、二次転写パイアス発生部129から二次転写電圧を印加して、このシートSにカラー像を二次転写してフルカラー画像を得る。また、モノクロ画像をシートSに転写する場合に、感光体21上にブラックトナー像のみを形成し、中間転写ベルト41上に転写し、カラー画像の場合と同様に二次転写領域R2に搬送されてきたシートSに転写してモノクロ画像を得る。

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【0036】なお、二次転写後、中間転写ベルト41の外周面に残留付着しているトナーについては、ベルトクリナー49によって除去される。このベルトクリナー49は、中間転写ベルト41を挟んでローラ46と対向して配置されており、適当なタイミングでクリーニングブレードが中間転写ベルト41に対して当接してその外周面に残留付着しているトナーを掻き落す。

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【0037】また、ローラ43の近傍には、中間転写ベルト41の外周面に形成されるパッチ画像の濃度を検出するためのパッチセンサPSが配置されると共に、中間転写ベルト41の基準位置を検出するための同周面位置センサRSが配置されている。

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【0038】図1に戻って、エンジン部Eの構成説明を続ける。転写ユニット4によってトナー像が転写されたシートSは、給排紙ユニット6の給紙部63によって所定の給紙経路(2点鎖線)に沿って二次転写領域R2の下流側に配置された定着ユニット5に搬送され、搬送されてくるシートS上のトナー像をシートSに定着する。そして、当該シートSはさらに給紙経路630にそって排紙部64に搬送される。

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【0039】この排紙部64は2つの排紙経路641a、641bを有しており、一方の排紙経路641aは定着ユニット5から搬送排紙トレイ1に延びると共に、他方の排紙経路641bは排紙経路641aと略平行に、再給紙部66とマルチピンユニットとの間に延びている。これらの排紙経路641a、641bに沿って3組のローラ対642～644が設けられており、定着済み

のシートSを搬送排紙トレイやマルチピンユニット側に向けて排出したり、その他方面側にも画像を形成するために再給紙部66側に搬送したりする。

【0040】この再給紙部66は、図1に示すように、上記のように排紙部64から反転搬送されてきたシート

Vと-1400V印加した場合の同様の図であり、感光体表面電位 $V_0$ はそれぞれ-400V、-800Vになり、一次転写を行う前は、中媒表面電位300Vであったが、一次転写を1回行うとそれぞれ287V、233Vに、2回行うとそれぞれ282V、209Vに、3回行うとそれぞれ280V、200Vに、4回行うとそれぞれ280V、196Vに低下して行く。

【0048】以上の結果から、感光体21への帯電パイアスに応じて中間転写ベルト41の表面電位の一次転写回数に比した変化量は異なることになる。中間転写ベルト41の表面電位が大きく変動すると、一次転写効率が高くなり、不安定になってしまう。したがって、上記のような画像形成装置においては、可能な限り帯電パイアスは変化させないことが望ましい。

【0049】なお、図5に感光体表面電位 $V_0$ と中媒表面電位の電位差が変化する場合に、1周目の転写時に比べて中間転写ベルト41上に帯電する負チャージ量を調べる結果を示す図であり、2周目以降においては若干この結果からずれるが、この図5から、中間転写ベルト41の表面電位が変動して感光体21の表面電位 $V_0$ との間の電位差が変動すると、中間転写ベルト41上の負チャージ量がそれに比して比例関係で変化する事が分かる。この中間転写ベルト41上の負チャージ量が変動すると、定電圧の一次転写電圧によって感光体21から中間転写ベルト41へ転写されるトナー像の転写効率も変動してしまう。

【0050】ところで、上記のような画像形成装置において、従来は形成する画像の階調を調整するために、図6(a)に模式図を示すように、帯電パイアスを変えて感光体表面電位を変化させて画像部に付着するトナー量を調整している。図6(a)において、帯電パイアスを上げて感光体表面電位を-500Vから-800Vに上げると、画像部と非画像部の電位分布は変換から破線のように変化し、図の現象パイアス-300V以下の破線で囲まれる面積が小さくなるので、現象パイアス-300Vより絶対値で低い電位部分に付着するトナー量は減少し、より薄くなる。逆に、感光体表面電位を-800Vから-500Vに下げると、画像部に付着するトナー量は増加し、より濃くなる。

【0051】しかしながら、以上のように、このような階調の調整を帯電パイアスを変えて行うと、中間転写ベルト41の表面電位の変化幅が大きくなり、一次転写効率等が不安定になってしまうので、このような帯電パイアスの調整による画像の階調調整は行わない方が望ましい。

【0052】そこで、本発明においては、図6(b)に示すように、帯電パイアスを変えて感光体表面電位を変化させずに、画像部の露光量を調整して画像の階調を調整するようにする。図6(b)において、画像部の露光量を下げた感光体の露光電位を-500Vから-200

Vに上げると、画像部と非画像部の電位分布は実線から破線のように変化し、図の現象パイアス-300V以下の破線で囲まれる面積が小さくなるので、現象パイアス-300Vより絶対値で低い電位部分に付着するトナー量は減少し、より薄くなる。逆に、露光量を上げて感光体の露光電位を-200Vから-50Vに下げると、画像部に付着するトナー量は増加し、より濃くなる。

【0053】ところで、図1に示すように、4色のトナーを重ね合わせてフルカラー画像を形成するために4色の現象電位23V、23C、23M、23Kを備える画像形成装置においては、色毎にトナーの特性が異なることから、実際上、トナーの色に応じて感光体表面電位 $V_0$ を異ならせざるを得ない。上記実施例においては、最適なトナー像を感光体21上に形成するためには、現象電位23Vでイエロートナー像を形成する場合は、帯電パイアスを-1400Vにして感光体表面電位 $V_0$ を-800Vに、現象電位23Mでマゼンタトナー像を形成する場合は、帯電パイアスを-1300Vにして感光体表面電位 $V_0$ を-700Vに、現象電位23Cでシアントトナー像を形成する場合は、帯電パイアスを-1200Vにして感光体表面電位 $V_0$ を-600Vに、現象電位23Kでブラックトナー像を形成する場合は、帯電パイアスを-1100Vにして感光体表面電位 $V_0$ を-500Vにすることが望ましい。

【0054】図7は、このように現象するトナーの色によって帯電パイアスを変えなければならないときに、異なる色のトナー像の形成順序と中媒表面電位の変化の関係を調べた結果を示す図である。温度と湿度は23℃、65%RHとした。

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【0055】この図7において、大きい順とは、帯電パイアスが大きき順、すなわち、1周目は-1400Vのイエロートナー像、2周目は-1300Vのマゼンタトナー像、3周目は-1200Vのシアントトナー像、4周目は-1100Vのブラックトナー像を形成した場合であり、小さい順とは、その反対に帯電パイアスが小さい順、すなわち、1周目は-1100Vのブラックトナー像、2周目は-1200Vのシアントトナー像、3周目は-1300Vのマゼンタトナー像、4周目は-1400Vのイエロートナー像を形成した場合である。

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【0056】この図7から明らかなように、帯電パイアスが大きき順に一次転写を行う場合、中媒表面電位は一次転写を1回行うと3000Vに、2回行うと235Vに、3回行うと194Vに、4回行うと170Vに低下して行くが、帯電パイアスが小さい順に一次転写を行う場合、一次転写を1回行うと300Vに、2回行うと274Vに、3回行うと245Vに、4回行うと214Vに低下して行く。明らかに帯電パイアスが小さい順に一次転写を行う方が、中媒表面電位の低下幅は小さく、より安定して確実に一次転写を行うことができる。

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【0057】以上のように、本発明の画像形成方式は、

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一次転写バイアス発生部126の定電圧電源から一定電圧の一次転写電圧を印加し、帯電ローラ22による感光体21の帯電電位は、少なくとも各色のカラートナー像に対しては固定され、かつ、トナー像の階調調整は画像部への露光量を調整することによって行うが、そのためには、帯電バイアス発生部121からの帯電バイアスには、顕像化されるトナー像の階調調整のためには調整可能にはせず、その代わりに、インターフェース112を介して与えられた画像信号に応じて強度変調される露光ユニット3からのレーザ光Lの強度を階調調整のために調整できるようにする。

【0058】また、本発明の画像形成方式は、設定された帯電バイアスが小さい順に、現像器23Y、23C、23M、23Kを選択して当接させて現像動作を行わせるが、そのためには、エンジンコントローラ12が上記の4つの現像器23Y、23M、23C、23Kを上記のように帯電バイアスが小さい順に選択して感光体21に当接させるようにする。

【0059】以上、本発明の画像形成方式を数例に基づいて説明してきたが、本発明はこれら実施例に限定されず種々の変形が可能である。

【0060】以上の説明から明らかなように、本発明の画像形成方式によると、一次転写バイアス印加電源として定電圧電源が用いられ、帯電手段による帯電抵抗体の帯電電位は、少なくとも各色のカラートナー像に対しては固定され、画像の階調調整は画像部への露光量を調整することによって行うので、異なる色のトナー像を順に中間転写媒体に転写する間の中間転写媒体上の表面電位の変動を大幅に小さくでき、トナー像の中間転写媒体への転写効率が安定化でき、装置のコストアップも生じず、に信頼性のある画像形成装置を実現することができ。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明の画像形成方式を適用する画像形成装置の1つの実施形態を示す図である。

【図2】図1の画像形成装置の電気的構成を示すブロック図である。

【図3】中間転写ベルトと感光体の層構成を示す断面図である。

【図4】帯電バイアスを変化させた場合の一次転写回数を重ねる毎の中間転写ベルトの表面電位の変化を調べた結果を示す図である。

【図5】感光体表面電位と中間転写ベルトとの電位差が変化する場合に中間転写ベルト上に帯電する負チャージ量を調べた結果を示す図である。

【図6】従来の画像の階調調整と本発明の画像の階調調整とを説明するための図である。

【図7】現像するトナーの色によって帯電バイアスを変えなければならないときのトナー像の形成順と中継表面電位の変化の関係を調べた結果を示す図である。

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【図8】中間転写媒体を備えた画像形成装置の1例を示す図である。

【図9】図8の変形例における中間転写媒体と感光体の層構成を示す断面図である。

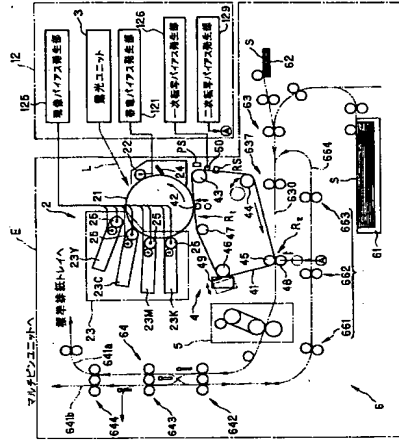
【符号の説明】

- E...エンジン部
- S...シート
- L...レーザ光
- R1...一次転写領域
- R2...二次転写領域
- PS...パッチセンサ
- RS...同期用読取センサ
- 1...制御ユニット
- 2...像拒持体ユニット
- 3...露光ユニット
- 4...転写ユニット
- 5...定着ユニット
- 6...給排紙ユニット
- 11...メインコントローラ
- 12...エンジンコントローラ
- 21...感光体
- 21a...導電層
- 21b...感光層
- 22...帯電ローラ
- 23...現像部
- 23Y...イエロー用現像器
- 23C...シアン用現像器
- 23M...マゼンタ用現像器
- 23K...ブラック用現像器
- 24...クリーニング部
- 25...現像ローラ
- 41...中間転写ベルト
- 41a...導電層
- 41b...抵抗層
- 41c...絶縁性基体
- 42...一次転写バックアップローラ
- 43、44...ローラ
- 45...二次転写バックアップローラ
- 46、47...ローラ
- 48...二次転写ローラ
- 49...ベルトクリーナ
- 50...電極ローラ
- 61...カセット
- 62...手差しトレイ
- 63...給紙部
- 64...排紙部
- 66...再給紙部
- 111...CPU
- 112...インターフェース
- 113...画像メモリ

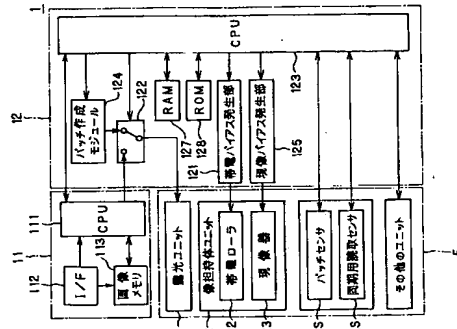
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- 121...帯電バイアス発生部
- 122...画像信号切換部
- 123...CPU
- 124...パッチ作成モジュール
- 125...現像バイアス発生部
- 126...一次転写バイアス発生部
- 127...RAM
- 128...ROM
- 129...二次転写バイアス発生部
- 630...給紙経路
- 637...ゲートローラ対
- 641a、641b...排紙経路
- 642~644...ローラ対
- 661~663...再給紙ローラ対
- 664...再給紙経路

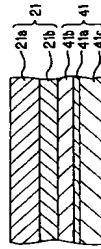
【図1】



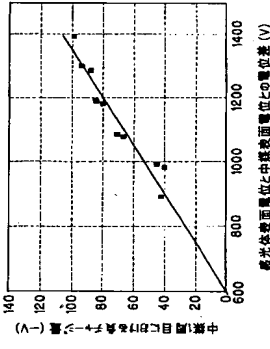
【図2】



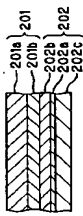
【図3】



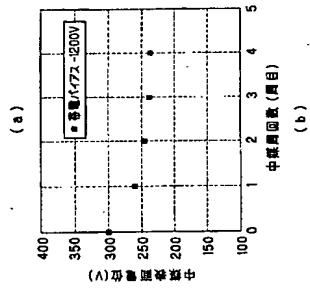
【図5】



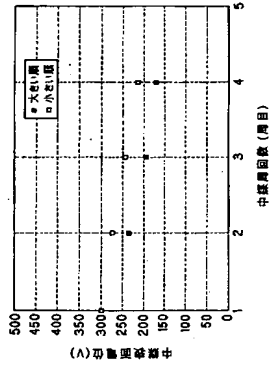
【図9】



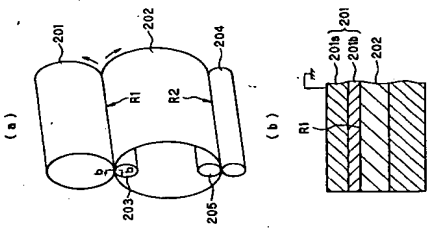
【図4】



【図7】



【図8】



フロントページの続き

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【図6】

